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A SHIPWRECK AVERTED BY THE USE OF OIL.

On several occasions we have urged on public attention the wonderful efficacy of oil in allaying rough tempestuous waves at sea, in cases of danger to mariners. 'Throwing oil on the troubled waters' is an old figurative sentiment, to which few pay any regard. The sentiment, however, has a foundation in fact, of which every one can satisfy himself, by practical experiment. So true is the fact, that the real thing to be wondered at is the frequency of shipwrecks which might probably have been averted by the simple sacrifice of a small cask of oil. Certainly those mariners who neglect to try the effect of this inexpensive precaution have not a little to answer for. How the oil should reduce the violence of the sea, is a scientific question. All that need here be said is, that the film of oil spreading along the surface of the surging waves tends to produce a calming effect, of which the navigator, driven to his last shifts, would be wrong not to take advantage.

Some instances of the value of oil in saving from shipwreck were given by us in an article, 'The Use of Oil at Sea,' 10th August 1878. In another article, 'Throwing Oil on the Waters,' on the 21st December 1878, we detailed the experiences of Shetland fishermen in saving their boats from being wrecked in raging tideways, by a very simple expedient. They crush in their hands the livers of any ling or cod they may have caught, and keep throwing them astern and around them. The effect is said to be magical. The waves are not lessened in size; but the oil keeps them from breaking, and thus extreme danger is averted. As what we stated was on trustworthy evidence, and may be readily verified, there is positively no excuse for neglecting precautions of this kind. The navigator who goes to sea unprovided with oil to be used on an emergency, may almost be said to invite destruction.

Not only should all sea-going ships be provided with oil, as a counteractive of danger to life and property, but all fishing-craft and pleasure-yachts.

We would particularly enforce this precaution on those who are intrusted with the use of Life-boats. For boats of any kind, one or two bladders of oil would suffice, and the cheapest whale-oil would answer the required purpose. When used in case of a storm, the bladders might be inclosed in a coarse canvas bag, and pricked all over with the point of a knife, to let the oil ooze out on the water. It will be proper to secure the bags to the boats by means of cords before being thrown overboard in the direction which appears most desirable. It might be suggested that in order to acquire proficiency in the management of these oil-bags, experiments should be made at suitable opportunities; the expense and trouble of such experiments being very inconsiderable in comparison with the advantages that may be derived.

In consequence of our repeated urgings, we should have refrained from so soon returning to the subject, but for receiving a letter from Mr Alexander Sprunt, British vice-consul at Wilmington, North Carolina, United States, dated 28th June 1879. The following is the letter, which will not be perused without interest by our readers:

'DEAR SIR—I consider that you are entitled to the thanks of not only shipmasters and shipowners, but of all who go down to the sea in ships and do business in the great waters, for publishing in the widely circulated *Chambers's Journal* the fact that during dangerously tempestuous weather at sea, a comparatively small quantity of oil thrown on the breaking waves greatly relieves the storm-vexed ship. I yesterday took down the experience of the master of a brigantine just arrived here from Bristol, on this point, as inclosed herewith. I doubt not you will receive many such acknowledgments of the excellent results attending the use of oil at sea; and it might be well still to keep before the reading public, both in Great Britain and this country, the great importance of this simple but valuable discovery.' The writer adds a number of personal compliments, and incloses copy of the following official deposition:

'British brigantine *Gem* of Sackville, New Brunswick, Richardson master. On the 1st April last, bound from Wilmington, North Carolina, for Bristol, took a heavy gale of wind about a degree to the eastward of Bermuda, from the south, veering rapidly to the north-west, whence it blew a hurricane for thirty-six hours, with a cross-breaking sea, ship labouring heavily—"started" the after-house and boats, stove lazarette hatch, and took try-sail from the mast. All hands aft in the cabin in case the sea should break over and carry away fore-house. 8 P.M., sea getting worse, the master thought of resorting to the oil experiment, which he had read of in *Chambers's Journal*. Had a canvas bag prepared, holding about three quarts of kerosene oil, with a rope of six fathoms attached, and kept trailing to windward; the oil leaking through the canvas greatly broke topping sea, and made matters much more favourable for the ship. This was kept up through the night; and at 3 A.M. on the 2d April the weather began to moderate. The mate, who had himself lashed to the rigging during the whole of his watch, believed with the captain that the resort to the oil saved the ship, as such fearful weather had never during the captain's experience of fourteen years been witnessed by him. A drop of the oil will smooth about four feet circumference of sea. Captain Richardson suggests that a canvas bag to hold about six gallons is the best size, pierced with small holes with a penknife, the holes to be enlarged as the canvas becomes wet and its texture closer.'

Here, then, is official testimony to the value of oil in allaying certain dangers on the occasion of tempests at sea. Surely, if there be truth in that and similar testimony, the duty of enforcing it should not be left to the editor of *Chambers's Journal*. We allow there is a vast gratification in knowing that we have been instrumental in doing the good which is above candidly admitted. But the matter goes beyond our efforts. It eminently deserves the attention of Lloyd's, and of all others who are specially concerned in shipping.

W. C.

YOUNG LORD PENRITH.

CHAPTER XLIV.—THE TWO LETTERS.

'Two letters for you, Mr Ashton,' said Edmunds the head-porter, as Hugh, who now found more time on his hands than he could easily dispose of, returned, after one of the solitary rambles that were now habitual to him, to the station. One of these—which was sealed with red wax, and bore the impression of a coat of arms such as the *Heralds' College* grants for money in this degenerate age, when the heraldic instinct seems dead, and the simple beauty of antique blazons unattainable—was from Mr Dicker. Hugh's patron, in kindly terms enough, informed his young friend of his intention, on a tour of inspection, in company with two other Directors, of visiting Hollow Oak Station on the ensuing day. Mr Dicker, as Deputy Chairman, named two o'clock as the probable time for the

arrival of the Directors' special train, hinted at possible promotion for Hugh as the result of his late courageous action, and expressed his intention of formally verifying the accounts and receiving the amount of cash accumulated at the station.

Now it so happened that the sum-total of the cash under Hugh's charge was, for so very minor a station, unusually large. There are, of course, regular rules as to the paying over of moneys in the hands of station-masters into those of a Company's Manager, or Deputy Manager; but these rules admit of exceptions, and one such had been made in the case of Hollow Oak. The late station-master, Mr Weeks, had left a hoard of his employers' gold and silver behind him; while an unusual amount of ready-money had been lately received, on account of cattle, sheep, poultry, and other agricultural produce, alive or dead, which had been transmitted to London at that hungry Christmas-time. Hugh had a hundred and ninety-three pounds, odd shillings, in the cash-box, which was kept as usual in the station-master's house, ready to be handed over to the proper authorities.

As for the accounts, there could be no difficulty about them. They were short, simple, and had been kept so steadily posted up that a very brief survey would suffice to audit them. Hugh thought much more of the friendly terms in which the capitalist addressed him, and of his satisfaction in seeing that kind face again, than he did of the responsibility which his position entailed upon him. The other letter, however, now claimed his attention. It was very different in appearance from Mr Dicker's, being an ill-written and untidy missive enough, the contents of which, however, when he opened it, were such as to send the blood rapidly coursing through his veins. These were the words of the letter:

SIR—If you will take the trouble to be at Bullbury to-morrow (market-day), and will meet, at the *Chequers* in King Street, a person who Wishes you Well, and will be in waiting there at one o'clock P.M., you may learn some information of value to you in the search in which you are engaged. Mr Ashton is advised, for the sake of what he holds dear, not to fail at time and place, where I shall count upon meeting you.

Such was the letter, which was in the strictest sense anonymous, inasmuch that it bore no pseudo-signature, such as 'Lovers of Justice,' and the like, are wont to append to the epistolary arrows they launch in the dark. And Hugh was not the less inclined to place some credence in the good faith of his unknown correspondent, on account of the grammatical slips, or the irregular transition from the third person to the present, which the letter itself contained. But in any case he should have blamed himself had he flung away a chance, no matter how slender or how desperate, of elucidating the dark mystery that he had vainly tried to pierce. It was quite true that since Hugh's appointment to Hollow Oak Station he had made many inquiries, guardedly, as he thought, but not so guardedly as to avoid the appetite for gossip, which is the bane of a country neighbourhood. But he had gained no information worth the having. Gipsy Nan alone seemed to possess a clue to the secret that he would have

given his very life to solve; and although he had tried, repeatedly, to meet with the wayward wanderer again, he had failed to obtain a second interview. Her people, even, seemed to have shifted their camp to another part of the Forest, and could not be met with. Hugh felt that he had no choice but to accept the anonymous invitation to the *Chequers* at Bullbury.

Hugh never hesitated as to keeping the rendezvous which had been given to him by his unknown correspondent. It so happened that no duties of an urgent character compelled him to be at Hollow Oak at or near the hour named in the letter. Had his nameless friend been cognisant of the ordinary routine of the little official colony, he could not have timed more conveniently the hour appointed for the responsible chief of the station to be seven miles off, at Bullbury. At one o'clock the porters went to their well-earned dinners, in the full conviction that there was nothing to do. Later on there would be lumbering Parliamentaries that stopped at Hollow Oak, and swift trains that went by like the wind, but which, unlike the wind, required clear rails and elbow-room. But for the moment the station-master and his subordinates had really nothing to do.

Hugh borrowed a farmer's horse—his Australian experience of bush-leapers and buck-jumpers had been noised abroad, and he had been begged to break in more than one skittish colt, since he came to Hollow Oak—and rode over to Bullbury. The chief hotel there, like the only public-house in Hollow Oak, bore the name of the *Beville Arms*. But Hugh did not choose to patronise the chief hotel; nor did the *Angel*, the *Rose and Crown*, or the *Harp*, dear to Irish labourers employed on the canal works, find favour in his eyes. Inquiring his way, he rode up to where the ancient sign of the *Chequers* swung aloft over cobble-stoned King Street, and there dismounted.

There was not much business done, even on market-day, to all appearance, at the *Chequers Inn*, Bullbury. Inns, like other institutions, have their fashion, and run to seed. The *Chequers* of Bullbury, third-rate at best, was now, to judge by the eye, obsolete. Two or three farmers or bailiffs had what they called their 'traps' in its grass-grown yard. A few horses were rattling their halters in its damp stable. The waiter who ran about carrying half-cooked meat and half-boiled vegetables to grumbling chance customers in the mouldy old coffee-room, was out at elbows, and had white seams to his coat, and a general air of irritable dejection. The very mastiff in his kennel seemed infected by the insolvent melancholy of the place, and whined instead of barking. It was plain that the *Chequers* was in a bad way of business.

But Hugh saw no sign of anybody on the lookout for him, or for any stranger. Over and over again did he pace up and down before the wide gateway, down which the winter wind whistled shrilly; but not a glimpse could be caught of any person who seemed likely to communicate tidings of importance. The few people in the mouldy coffee-room appeared to be gloomy and preoccupied, men who devoured a bad dinner in hurried fashion, then called for the bill, and snarled at it, and were stingy to the ineffably shabby waiter, and went out into the town, declaring in no measured language that the *Chequers* was a rat-

hole that should have no more of their patronage.

But as for any one intent on him or his concerns, Hugh Ashton felt as though he might as well have been in the Sahara itself, amidst yellow gravel, and thorn bushes, and driving sand, such as constitute every wilderness from the Pillars of Hercules to many-hued Nile. There seemed to be not a soul, in or near the inn, whether man or woman, whose mind was busy on any other subject than the welfare of the thinker. When Hugh asked the hostler if any strange gentleman were waiting about, the rough fellow, in his catskin cap and fustian jacket, replied by asking if Hugh 'knewed of a place where a poor man as knowed horses, and did 'em justice allays, could make a living.'

And the fluffy-haired waiter, in a white-seamed coat and pumps down at heel, confided to Hugh his desire to serve some member of the British aristocracy, in town or country, 'where I might be treated a little less of a negro slave, and have a trifle wholesomer victuals, when dinner-time does come!' concluded the waiter, with suppressed vehemence, and a stealthy shaking of a feeble fist towards the window of the room wherein his bankrupt master, with his lean wife and unruly children, were dining noisily.

At last Hugh went back, baffled and perplexed. Had Ghost Nan been the writer of the letter, and if so, why had she failed in keeping the appointment? Hugh could not tell; but at anyrate, he had lost nothing save his time. On riding back to Hollow Oak, he found the station peaceful, and the regular routine of the day going on as steadily as ever.

CHAPTER XLV.—SALEM JACKSON'S STRATAGEM.

As a gaunt and hungry winter-wolf prowls about a sheepfold, half-maddened by the scent of live mutton that comes steamingly from the woolly flock, close-packed within, and yet keenly anxious to keep clear behind him the track by which his tireless gallop over snow and sward, through bush and brake, may outstrip hound and horseman, until he sees the Pyrenees, with peak unscaled by human foot, and cavern into which none but the 'gray beast' dares to creep, towering aloft like the ramparts of his city of refuge; even so did Salem Jackson, once a mariner on board the steamer *Western Maid*, range around the station of Hollow Oak.

Hugh, who knew him, was away. Salem Jackson, prompted by the Black Miller, had taken care that such should be the case. His anonymous letter, backed by Swart's local knowledge, had drawn away, on a false scent, the object of his hate and fear. The former mutineer had never forgiven the blow by which Hugh Ashton, on the occasion of the shipwreck, had caused him to measure his length on the steamer's deck; but then he had never forgotten it, and the remembrance of his former captain's superior prowess cowed him. Salem Jackson was of quite another order of scoundrelism from that to which his grim employer, Ralph Swart, belonged. Had any man struck the Black Miller a blow, there would have been a grapple indeed, from which one or other would hardly have emerged alive and unmaimed. But Salem Jackson was of another

mould. He feared hard knocks. He feared the law. He had used the knife, and had fired the revolver, not always with lethal consequences, in southern cities to the west of the Atlantic. But that was because others did so, and because, in tavern brawls at Memphis or New Orleans, it was safer to fight than to allow other rowdies to have free play for pistol or for bowie. In England, however, and with Hugh Ashton, though unarmed, for an antagonist, Salem Jackson preferred not to resort to the rude arbitrament of blows.

The sailor had his bowie-knife in the weasel-skin belt that he wore beneath his blue waistcoat. But he had no pistol. His three revolvers, relics of a stormy past on the other side of the ocean, he had purposely left at Treport. He would not trust himself to carry firearms, for fear, before his treacherous work was done, the door should burst open, and he should find himself confronted by his former Captain, and only able to free himself by doing what would bring his felon neck under the immediate attention of the Newgate authorities. He meant to succeed, this time, by fraud, but not by force, and therefore perhaps deserved to be likened rather to the fox than to the fox's lupine cousin, that turns so savagely on dog and man as they follow, straggling, in the long pursuit over hill and dale. Both Sir Lucius and the Black Miller had judged rightly in selecting this man, inspired as he was by mingled hate and greed, as a worthy instrument for vile designs. Salem Jackson was strong and lithe, and had a practised cunning which had eluded deserved punishment before that day.

The habits of railway servants at small stations are so much alike, allowance being made for the coming and going of trains, that their proceedings may be predicated with almost as much certainty as those of bees or ants. At Hollow Oak there was nothing to prevent porters or policeman from locking up the station and going off to dinner at one o'clock, the hour most congenial to themselves, and most convenient to their families. Nobody, on these occasions, was left in the station except Hugh Ashton, if he chanced to be at home, and a boy, a sort of apprentice to the guild of portership, who was called familiarly 'Brooms,' who drew about four-and-sixpence of weekly salary from the Company's exchequer, and who rubbed door-handles, and cleaned lamps, and wore corduroys, and was by no means the least efficient of the permanent staff there on duty. It had been arranged that little 'Brooms,' who was the son of a widow—and, it may be said, a widow of the Company's making, since his father, a plate-layer, had been killed on the line through some inattention to the switching of points—should always get such dinner as he was to have when the men came back from theirs, in order that the station might never remain absolutely ungarrisoned. And this, Salem Jackson, peering down from the edge of the fir plantation that crested the bank on the down side of the line, was not slow to perceive. He saw the porters troop off, like schoolboys dismissed from school, and saw the green-coated policeman follow them yawningly. Hugh Ashton, he knew, was, thanks to the lying letter he had himself, at the Black Miller's suggestion, indited, away at Bullbury. But then there was the boy.

Little Brooms, when left alone, moved for some

minutes to and fro, walking the platform with an air of authority, much as some junior lieutenant in the navy, who was a midshipman but yesterday, walks the deck as officer of the watch. He tried doors, glanced into the telegraph-room, as if to see whether anything had occurred to the instruments, and looked into the empty waiting-room and booking-office. Then he began gravely to peruse the scraps of literature gratuitously provided in the shape of large-type advertisements, and seemed absorbed in contemplation of the merits of iron bedsteads, cattle-food, mustard, and perambulators. Salem Jackson, watching this young student from his lurking-place, waxed impatient. The minutes were flying. Was this urchin such a marvel of steadiness that he would stand sentinel until the men returned from dinner? And if so, would it not be necessary to secure his silence by—

Ha! a change had come over young Brooms, and he had forgotten, for the moment, his position of responsibility as a railway servant, to remember that he was a boy, and strolled off to the locked carriage-gate of the station, there to indulge in a contest of repartee with other little lads of his own age, who came close to the wooden bars to banter him with rustic wit on the subject of the official cap and buttons, which they nevertheless envied, and to ask if he were hungry. Now was the time! So good an opportunity might never recur. With a sailor's activity, Salem Jackson cleared the fence, scrambled down the bank, and darted across the line. The boy, still beside the gate, had not turned his head. There were some crates, filled with live poultry, waiting for conveyance to London, stacked in a corner. Behind these Salem Jackson ensconced himself, while he took a closer survey of the place. What he desired to find must be looked for, he felt convinced, either in the ticket-office or in the station-master's house. The latter was the more likely of the two. But as a prudent general leaves nothing to chance, he determined to explore the ticket-office first.

Peeping round the corner of the pile of crates, Salem Jackson looked cautiously at the boy. The boy's face was yet averted, but he seemed as though he were in the act of turning his head. Quick as thought, the ambushed lurker crept from behind the crates, and gained the waiting-room, through which he passed into the booking-office. Once in the citadel, as it were, of the little pacific fortress that he sought to surprise, the Cornishman who had seen the world made haste to profit by the occasion. The tiny ticket-office was locked up. This was a matter of course. But the intruder's quick eye soon perceived that the stout timber partition, painted and varnished, which shut it in, separating it from the booking-office—which also served as a waiting-room for passengers of the second and third class—did not reach the ceiling, but left, probably for ventilating purposes, a space through which a man could easily squeeze himself. To scale the wooden screen, difficult perhaps to a rustic, was to a sailor a feat that presented no difficulty, and soon Salem Jackson found himself on the inner side of the partition.

The ticket-office did not prove to contain what the Black Miller's emissary was hunting for. In a half-shut drawer were two sovereigns and some

thirty shillings in silver. There were the tickets, and the stamping instruments, and some accounts and printed forms, and a watch belonging to the clerk or head porter, and an overcoat hanging on a peg, and a few parcels in brown paper, ready for conveyance. With none of these things did Salem Jackson meddle. He was in the act of reclimbing the partition, when he heard footsteps and the sound of a young voice, and in an instant he removed his brown sinewy hands from the top of the wooden screen, and stood, motionless as a statue, on the inner ledge close to the aperture where tickets are given out and change counted, stooping his head low, lest it should be visible above the partition.

Would that boy never go? Perhaps the fire in the booking-office was an attraction, on that chilly day, compared with which even such social intercourse as was possible through the bars of a gate had lost its charms. But at anyrate young Brooms lingered long in front of the blazing coals, shuffling his feet as he hummed a nigger ditty picked up from some roving company of begrimed serenaders, and all this time the strong man, scarcely venturing even to glance up at the clock overhead to note the provoking flight of time, watched and waited. All unconscious was the lad of the close proximity of Salem Jackson, with his knife concealed beneath his clothes, and breathing softly in the dread of being overheard. Would the brat never go? The villain grew desperate as he saw his chance of success and safety waning. Should he spring out now, like a tiger from the long grass of the jungle, he could readily—

Ah! Brooms, with the versatility of his age, was sauntering out at last, unwitting of the bony fingers that were preparing to clutch at his throat.

When the sound of the boy's iron-bound heels had died away in the distance, the seaman leaped noiselessly over the wooden screen, traversed the waiting-room, and after a brief sojourn under the lee of the pile of crates, made his way to the door of the station-master's house. The door was locked. But Salem Jackson was prepared to find it locked. Drawing from an outer pocket of his rough pea-coat a bunch of skeleton keys, such as locksmiths and burglars use, he selected one and then another. At the second attempt he succeeded, went in, and shut the door. There was nothing in the parlour, he found, that would serve his purpose. In Hugh's bedroom, when he reached it, he found a cupboard which was locked, but which, with slight trouble, he contrived to open. In it was a large-sized box of japanned metal, bearing the initials of the Railway Company, and secured by a patent padlock. The sailor shook the box, and heard the rattle of the money inside.

'Let us see, now,' muttered the fellow, as he produced another and a smaller bunch of wardless master-keys, 'whether the old Philadelphias won't tackle this toy from Brummagem.—I thought as much!' he added complacently, as the lock yielded to his efforts, and he was enabled to lift the lid of the cash-box. The sailor's eyes brightened as he saw the notes and gold within, and that the sum was larger than he had expected it to be. There were papers too, but of these he selected but one, which he crammed hastily into his pocket, along with the bank-notes and the

gold. Then he reclosed and relocked the cash-box, replaced it in the exact situation where he had found it, and locked the cupboard. Hugh's window had been left open. It was high above the ground, but an agile man could drop from it into the garden below, uninjured. Salem Jackson crept down-stairs, locked the door, remounted the stairs, and, emerging from the window, grasped the sill firmly, and dropped, as softly as a cat would have done, on the strip of turf below. Then he leaped the fence, climbed the paling, burst through a plantation of young trees, and, with an ugly grin of triumph, descended the bank, ran across the line, and plunged into the fir-wood, at the opposite side of which wound the Bullbury Road.

'Lifted that one's hair, I guess,' snarled out the sailor, as he trudged off townwards. 'I'd give a hundred dollars, I would, to see his face, presently.'

But Salem Jackson had not seen another face, watching him from amidst the dark trunks of the fir plantation as he cleared the garden fence, nor did he hear the footsteps that seemed to echo his own as he neared the town of Bullbury.

WEST OF SCOTLAND FOLK-LORE.

WITHIN the last two or three years, considerable progress has been made in the collection of the folk-tales and country sayings which remain to us. Not only has a Society, under able guidance, specially devoted itself to the collection and preservation of those relics, but numerous works upon the subject of folk-lore have seen the light. It is a truism that railways and the schoolmaster are fast changing all the conditions of life. Every year the network becomes more complex, every summer the tourist penetrates into remoter villages. The coming and going of many strangers, the news from east and west, have their imperceptible influence in inspiring new thoughts. Parents find that their children have learned at the Board school to despise all the little home superstitions; and they themselves therefore grow yearly more and more afraid of inquisitive gentlemen who want to know if there are any witches in the neighbourhood, or if Sandie or Jeanie know any ghost-stories.

A recently published volume on the folk-lore of the west of Scotland (*Folk-lore, or Superstitious Beliefs in the West of Scotland within this Century*, by James Napier, F.R.S.E., F.C.S. &c. Paisley: Alex. Gardner, 1879) is deserving of notice, mainly because in it we have the notes of one who was born and bred among the popular beliefs and superstitions which in a green old age he has recorded for the information of students. We have therefore in reading his book a confidence in the accuracy of its statements, which cannot unfortunately be felt regarding all treatises on folk-lore. A tourist however painstaking and vigilant, is more than likely to make some mistake in noting down a local saying or tale. Owing to want of familiarity with the dialect, or possibly to acquaintance with kindred legends, his version is often, though unconsciously on his part, distorted and absurd. Folk-lore as a study requires rigid attention to the state in which a tale is

found; and in this as in other studies, there is nothing that ought to be more avoided than hasty generalisation. The labours of Professor Max Müller, Dr Tylor, Mr Ralston, and others have shewn indisputably the value to be attached to comparisons of many versions of one tale: and we may hazard the assertion that not only is the collector of folk-lore quite unjustified as a rule in drawing conclusions from his own investigations; but further, that it is impossible for any one who has not devoted time and talents to the special study of comparative folk-lore, and who has not at hand the fruits of other men's investigations, to speak with authority as to the worth or the worthlessness of a single note.

In the west of Scotland it was still an article of belief in days not very long gone by, that if an infant died before baptism its fate was only too certain; and the sighing of the wind among the trees was interpreted as the wails of unchristened bairns. If a stranger inquired what name had been chosen for a child, before baptism, the cautious answer given was: 'It has not been out yet;' for it was unlucky to call the child by any name. Great, therefore, was the anxiety to have the rite performed; and an instance is known of a baby born on a Saturday being carried two miles to church on the following day, rather than allow so long a space as a week to elapse. Great importance was attached to the choice of the woman who should carry the infant to church, to the manner in which the first person she met received the ancient gift of bread and cheese, and to the order in which the children were baptised; for if by any mischance Jeanie was christened before Sandie, Jeanie would have a beard, and Sandie would have none! Salt must have been familiar to the infant palate. Not only immediately after birth was the child bathed in salted water, and made to taste it three times, but whenever the mother took her baby to a friend's house for the first time, custom ordained that the person visited should put salt into the child's mouth and wish it well. But too great well-wishing was as dangerous as aversion, for the 'weel-faured' or well-favoured were most likely to be stolen by Queen Mab. No pains were spared to ward off the evil influence; and here we note that Mr Napier was himself thought to have had 'a blink of an ill e'e.'

'I have quite a vivid remembrance,' says he, 'of being myself believed to be the unhappy victim of an evil-eye. I had taken what was called a *dwining*, which baffled all experience. . . To remove this evil influence, I was subjected to the following operation, which was prescribed and superintended by a neighbour "skilly" in such matters. A sixpence was borrowed from a neighbour, a good fire was kept burning in the grate, the door was locked, and I was placed upon a chair in front of the fire. The operator, an old woman, took a tablespoon, and filled it with water. With the sixpence she then lifted as much salt as it could carry, and both were put into the water in the spoon. The water was then stirred with the forefinger till the salt was dissolved. Then the soles of my feet and the palms of my hands were bathed with this solution thrice, and after these bathings I was made to taste the solution three times. The operator then drew her wet forefinger across my brow—

called scoring aboon the breath. The remaining contents of the spoon she then cast right over the fire into the hinder part of the fire, saying as she did so: "Gude preserve frae a' skaithe." [Preserve him from all harm.] These were the first words permitted to be spoken during the operation. I was then put in bed; and, in attestation of the efficacy of the charm, recovered. To my knowledge this operation has been performed within these forty years, and probably in many outlying country places it is still practised.'

The evil-eye was the more to be dreaded since it was not necessary that the evil-worker should see the child—the only thing indispensable being possession of something which had belonged to the child, as a lock of hair, nail-parings, or rags of clothing. The theory was, that if one of these was buried in the earth, as it decayed, so slowly and surely would its former owner die, through some assumed association of part and whole, or *sympathy*. In order to guard against this, all hair and nail-parings were scrupulously burned. Many objected even to have their likeness taken; it was unlucky. Doubtless, some lingering fear suggested the evil use a badly disposed person might make of it; and Mr Napier speaks of having heard of several persons who never had a day's health after being photographed. Among other curious superstitions in the west of Scotland—though not all, as students of folk-lore know, peculiar to that district—respecting children, we are told that when a child was taken from its mother, and carried outside the bedroom for the first time after its birth, it was lucky to take it up-stairs; and if—as we suppose was not uncommonly the case—there were no stairs in the house, the child was taken three steps up a ladder—we know an instance of this recently in the west end of Glasgow—or in case of emergency, the nurse got upon a chair! Again, to prevent children being stolen by the fairies, an open Bible should always be placed near a child.

Regarding the aversion to May marriages, the very pertinent remark has been made, that a strong reason exists in Scotland in the fact that the Scottish removal or 'flitting' term occurs in the end of May, and what young woman would like to enter upon her married life unless she could in some measure be assured of her new home! Sixty years ago, the first thing done to prepare the house for the bride was, on the bridal eve, to sprinkle salt on the floor, as a protection against the evil-eye; then the bride's feet were washed, this being, as suggested, in all probability a survival of the old Norse custom which enjoined the maiden-friends of the bride to assist at a sort of religious purification. On the eventful day, which was always a Friday, great attention was paid to every incident; for if the bride broke a dish, or the postman forgot to deliver a letter to the bride until he was some way on his journey, and had to return, or some soot came down the chimney, it was a bad omen for the future wedded life. After the knot had been tied and the clergyman had kissed the bride, 'the party returned in the following order: first, the two fathers in company together, then the newly married couple, behind them the best-man and the best-maid, and the others following in couples as they might arrange. There were frequently as many as twenty couples. On coming within a mile or so

of the young couple's house, where the mother of the young Goodman was waiting, a few of the young men would start on a race home. This race [as on a former occasion we informed our readers] was often keenly contested, and was termed *running the brooze* or *braize*. The one who reached the house first and announced the happy completion of the wedding, was presented with a bottle of whisky and a glass, with which he returned to meet the marriage procession; and the progress of the procession was generally so arranged that he should meet them before they arrived at the village or town where the young couple were to be resident. He was therefore considered their first-foot, and distributed the contents of his bottle among the party, each drinking to the health of the young married pair; and then bottle and glass were thrown away and broken. The whole party then proceeded on their way to the young folks' house. At riding weddings, it was the great ambition of farmers' sons to succeed in winning the *braize*, and they would even borrow racing-horses for the occasion.

When the bride had been lifted over the threshold, and her mother-in-law had broken the cake of bread over her head, she was led to the hearth, and the poker and tongs, and occasionally the broom, presented to her along with the keys of the house. These ceremonies ended, and a substantial supper partaken of, the young people turned to the dance, where, if either bride or bridegroom had elder brothers or sisters unmarried, those neglected ones danced the first reel without their shoes. (Scotch weddings, it must be noted, frequently take place in the evening.)

The rejoicing days over, 'the first care,' says Mr Napier, 'of the young married wife was still, in my young days, to spin and get woven sufficient linen to make for herself and her husband their *dead-cloes* or shroud. I can well remember the time when, in my father's house, these things were spread out to air before the fire. This was done periodically, and these were days when mirth was banished from the household and everything was done in a solemn mood. The day was kept as a Sabbath.' Among the miscellaneous superstitions of daily life, it was said that if on seeing the first plough in the season, it was coming towards the observer, it was a lucky sign, and whatever undertaking he was then engaged in, would be certain of success; but if the plough was going from him, the reverse would be his fate. If luck was desired with any article of dress, it should be worn first at church. If a person in rising from table overturned his chair, he had been speaking untruthfully. If a man spoke aloud to himself, he would die a violent death. If nets were set on the Sabbath, the herring would leave the district (thus it is said the herring were driven from Lamlash about two years ago). If a double ear of corn were put over the looking-glass, the house would not be struck by lightning. For long it was customary for farmers to leave a portion of their fields uncropped, dedicated to the evil spirit, and called *goodman's croft*.

In the above notes, only a few of the superstitions illustrated in the volume to which we have had occasion to refer, have been touched upon. To give further examples would occupy more space than we can afford; and we must be content with remarking, that however we may now

regard these old-world sayings and doings, their study in a collected form may serve to illustrate the growth of the world's civilisation and the progress of man's mind.

DIFFICULTY OF VERIFYING HISTORY.

THE evidence on which historical statements rest is often found, on close and careful examination, to be woefully faulty. The real facts are ascertained to have been different in important particulars; or the conclusions drawn from them are greater than they can support; or no origin whatever for the statements can be traced. Grave discussions (for instance) have arisen within the last few years concerning the evidence on which the events and personages connected with the past history of England and Scotland are depicted by historians; we assuredly ought to know the truth on such matters, if attainable; instead of which, charges and counter-charges of error are freely brought forth. Other countries experience a like difficulty. For our own pages, however, the subject may be illustrated by examples which admit of being treated with a lighter touch.

At Puzzuoli, in Italy, is a convent which owns a fish-pond just outside the wall; and near the pond is a figure of a man who, according to legend, was struck blind while fishing there: a punishment for fishing in sacred water, or in a pond situated in consecrated ground. He was thus deprived for ever of the power of seeing the fish he caught. So far good; but it has been pointed out that the idea is traceable to a much earlier date, when there was certainly no convent at Puzzuoli. The Roman epigrammatist and poet Martial had long before given the self-same story, but applicable to a fish-pond belonging to the Emperor Domitian.

What did Lord Chief-justice Cockburn say concerning the handwriting which was brought in evidence during the far-famed Tichborne trial? Surely, it may be urged, there can be no doubt on such a point as this! And yet doubt there was, and perhaps still is. The reporters of most of the London daily newspapers took down the words with unquestioned honesty of purpose; nevertheless there were differences, chiefly in the use of small words and in punctuation, which led to two directly opposite conclusions—one that the learned judge declared two handwritings to be similar; the other that he had pronounced them to be strikingly dissimilar. The late Mr Thom, who introduced this matter in *Notes and Queries*, was twitted with having made a difficulty of it; but his reply was a good one—that the twitters virtually twitted one another.

When Baron Marochetti's equestrian statue of Richard Cœur-de-Lion was set up in Palace Yard, one of the newspapers informed its readers that King Richard, on his death-bed, commanded his attendants to lay him on the floor naked and flog him, as a wholesome discipline. They flogged him thoroughly, and then he died. A search in the old historians has failed to bring to light any other authority for this than that Richard underwent some discipline at the hands of the clergy.

During the Tobacco Controversy in the medical journals some years ago, one of the combatants declared that the great Sir Isaac Newton was a determined smoker. This set inquirers to work; and they found that the reliable biographies of

the great philosopher do not support this assertion. On the contrary Sir David Brewster says that 'when Sir Isaac was invited to take snuff, he declined either to smoke or to snuff, remarking that "he would make no necessities to himself,"'

'Up Guards, and at 'em!' Much interest attaches to the controversy whether the Duke of Wellington used these words at Waterloo. It is agreed on all hands that his custom was to shelter his troops as much as possible from artillery-fire by taking advantage of such irregularities of ground as might present themselves. He caused the soldiers to sit or lie down till the moment of attack; and then, when the enemy appeared likely to advance, he bade them rise and be the first to attack. The general belief is that he did this at Waterloo. An officer of the second brigade of Guards, writing some years afterwards his reminiscences of that eventful period, stated that the Duke at the time was not in such a spot that troops could have heard him, and that the 'Up Guards, and at 'em!' was the invention of some writer more graphic than veritable. The curious part of the matter is that when Mr Wyatt long subsequently took a likeness of the Duke, as a preliminary to a statue, and asked him about the truthfulness or otherwise of the popular account, His Grace replied that he did not remember having used the words, nor could he remember what words he had really used. Certainly they are rather more melodramatic than suited the plain-speaking Wellington.

The French have a great tendency to cherish sayings and phrases which were uttered or are believed to have been uttered by celebrated men. This proneness is due in part to a pardonable kind of national vanity, and in part to a certain fitness in the French language to adapt itself to brief, telling, epigrammatic sentences and phrases. Multitudes of such examples are to be met with, found on sober scrutiny to lack verification; nevertheless they live, and seem likely to live in spite of criticism.

'La France est assez riche pour payer sa gloire,' is attributed to Guizot the statesman, when he signed a treaty of peace with a vanquished power without asking for a money indemnity. France has truly shewn herself, in recent years, to be rich enough to pay for defeat if not for glory; but the question is whether Guizot uttered the words attributed to him—words which brought upon him a taunt for boastfulness by the Opposition. It has been shewn that the phrase was put into his mouth by a French journalist—in fact a downright invention.

'La Garde meurt, et ne se rend pas!' said to have been exclaimed by General Cambronne, has in like manner been traced to a Parisian journalist; yet the French will doubtless continue to believe that the General, in relation to the condition of the famous Imperial Guard at a critical moment, heroically declared that the Guard would die rather than surrender.

'Fils de St Louis, montez au ciel!' The Abbé Edgeworth is said to have uttered these pious but somewhat venturesome words at the execution of the hapless Louis XVI. The Republicans who decapitated the king had of course no belief that they were sending 'the son of St Louis' to heaven; but the Royalists long cherished the idea

that the words had really been uttered by the Abbé. When questioned afterwards on the matter, however, he stated that the phrase was invented by the editor of one of the newspapers, and had not been used by him.

'Vive la République!' was the heroic shout of the crew of *Le Vengeur*, as she sank beneath the waves after a desperate hard battle. At least so the majority of Frenchmen believe. But the more sober among critics fail to find any evidence to shew that the unfortunate crew said anything of the kind.

'It is wrong for a man in a high station to revenge an affront suffered when he occupied a lower step on the ladder of life.' This, or something to this effect, was long attributed to Louis XIII., in reference to a wrong or an insult he had endured when Duke of Orleans. But the cruel critics have traced the magnanimous aphorism to an earlier date—the speaker being the Duke of Savoy, who prior to his ducal honours was only a Count. Shakspeare appreciated the sentiment well, when he made Henry V. behave with noble courtesy to the Chief-justice, who, in the days when the former was the roystering Prince Hal, had punished him for a misdemeanour; but the great dramatist did not put it into so sententious a form.

'All is lost except Honour,' was long believed in France to have been the sole contents of a letter in which Francis I. informed his mother of his defeat at the battle of Pavia; but when a recent examination of the king's letters was instituted, no such words were to be met with.

During the short Peace of 1814, when a hope was entertained throughout the greater part of Europe that the sun of the terrible Napoleon was set for ever, the Count d'Artois—afterwards Charles X.—entered France from exile in England. To please or appease persons who feared that stern measures would be adopted by the restored Bourbons, he is credited with having said: 'There is only one Frenchman the more; nothing is changed.' This became current on the authority of Count Beugnot. The speech was certainly neat and epigrammatic, as expressed in French: 'Rien n'est changé, Messieurs; il n'y a qu'un Français de plus.' It has been found, however, that the words were invented by a *littérateur* to adorn a newspaper account of Charles's public entry into Paris. The inhabitants of the gay metropolis rather liked poking fun at the somewhat obese Bourbon prince. Sir Robert Wilson, in his *Note-book*, speaking of a time when there was a general belief that the Count had really uttered the words imputed to him, narrates that when the once famous giraffe came to Paris, some of the wits made the animal say: 'Rien n'est changé, Messieurs; il n'y a qu'une bête de plus;' and that when the giraffe was taken to the palace at the king's command, the animal professed to be mortified at finding himself no longer the greatest *bête* in the kingdom. We must here bear in mind that *bête* in French frequently denotes dull, foolish, stupid—an additional sting in the arrows of the wits.

The time at which, and the mode in which the allied powers heard of the news which startled them all so greatly—the escape of Napoleon from Elba in 1815—have become the subject of a remarkable controversy, which tends to shew how difficult it often is to trace such matters to

their true source. The popular version is given in Sir Henry Bulwer's work on *Historical Characters*. On the 5th of March in the above-named year, while the Congress of Vienna was being held, a splendid ball was given at which most of the royal and distinguished diplomatists were present. A whisper gradually spread through the saloons to the effect that the dreaded enemy had escaped from his temporary island-prison. Prince Metternich suspected that Napoleon would at once march to Paris. The Duke of Wellington suggested that the Prince, as representative of Austria, should promptly draw up a proclamation, to be signed by all the powers, denouncing Bonaparte as a pirate and freebooter. M. Varnhagen, however, has recently ascertained that the scene in question did not take place at a ball. The historian wrote to Metternich, asking to be favoured with the real facts of the case. According to this account a conference of most of the plenipotentiaries lasted during the greater part of the night of March 6-7. Metternich, after two hours' sleep, was awakened by his valet, who handed him a letter marked 'urgent'; it came from the Austrian consul at Genoa. Metternich, wearied with hard work, left the letter unopened, probably not observing the word 'urgent.' Opening the letter two or three hours afterwards, he was startled at the contents. It comprised simply six lines, stating that the commander of an English vessel had called at the Austrian consulate to ask whether Napoleon Bonaparte had been seen at Genoa, as he had escaped from Elba. Metternich dressed and hastened to his sovereign the Emperor of Austria. The latter announced that he would at once send an army into France, and bade his minister ascertain whether Russia and Prussia would do the like. In one single hour all the three sovereigns had agreed, and had seen Field-marshal Prince Schwarzenberg about the command. By ten o'clock orders were transmitted to three armies.—At a midnight ball on March 5, and in the Austrian minister's bedroom at eight o'clock on the morning of the 7th, are obviously incompatible; and thus Varnhagen claims to have corrected a popular error which had deceived Bulwer as well as other writers.

In an article relating to the question whether and to what extent 'History repeats itself' (inserted in this *Journal* for March 15, 1879), reference is made to the Rev. George Harvest, a clergyman whose erudition was more than equalled by his eccentricities. In sheer absence of mind he threw his watch instead of a pebble into the Thames. There is something so marvellously like this in one of Addison's papers in the *Spectator*, that one's suspicions are excited. Will Honeycomb's Club and Mr Harvest's Club; Somerset Gardens and the Temple Gardens; seven minutes to spare in each case; the picking up of a curiously shaped pebble; the intention to shew it to a virtuoso; the pocketing of the pebble and the flinging away of the watch—coincidences beyond measure strange. We have deemed it not unprofitable to dip into this matter a little. *Notes and Queries* quoted the anecdote of Mr Harvest from the *Rock* newspaper, and at the same time drew attention to its resemblance to the *Spectator* anecdote. The *Rock*, we find, gave no authorities. A little search has brought under our notice two biographical tracts or pamphlets, published early in the present

century, each giving in full the anecdote of Mr Harvest. He was, it appears, incumbent of Thames Ditton in the second half of the last century. His death is noticed in some of the London periodicals for 1781; but we have failed to trace the story of his watch and pebble farther back than thirty years after that date. As the two tracts or pamphlets are anonymous, we have no hesitation in stating our belief that some writer (name unknown) concocted the story out of materials which he found ready to his hand in the *Spectator*.

This question of Mr Harvest may seem trifling in itself, but it affords a good example of some of the difficulties which arise in verifying history.

THE STORY OF A SPEAR.

AN oriental-looking weapon decidedly; indeed any one familiar with antique Eastern arms will recognise it at once as one of the pikes formerly carried by running footmen in India. It is of iron, plated with silver, in rings, to give a firmer grasp. It is rather more than six feet in length, and has a triangular blade more than twenty inches long, with sharp edges. A formidable weapon unquestionably, in skilful and resolute hands. Among a host of other oriental curiosities in a certain west-country English mansion it occupies a conspicuous place of honour. It is regarded indeed with a singular veneration—as well it may be; for on the 14th of January eighty years ago there was done with that spear a deed of prowess which stands unique even in the long and brilliant record of British valour—a deed which proves, if proof were needed, that the civilian can in emergency play the hero as effectively and successfully as the trained soldier. The story of that spear we purpose telling here.

The scene of the story is laid in the holy city of Benares, which was at that time, to use the words of Macaulay, 'in wealth, population, dignity, and sanctity among the foremost of Asia. It was commonly believed that half a million of human beings were crowded into that labyrinth of lofty alleys, rich with shrines and minarets and balconies and carved oriels to which the sacred apes clung by hundreds. The traveller could scarce make his way through the press of holy mendicants and not less holy bulls. . . . Hundreds of devotees came thither every month to die; for it was believed that a peculiarly happy fate awaited the man who should pass from the sacred city into the sacred river. Nor was superstition the only motive which allured strangers to that great metropolis. Commerce had as many pilgrims as religion. All along the shores of the venerable stream lay great fleets of vessels laden with rich merchandise. From the looms of Benares went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the balls of St James's and of Versailles; and in the bazaars, the muslins of Bengal and the sabres of Oude were mingled with the jewels of Golconda and the shawls of Cashmere.' But Benares was not only the gathering-place of merchants and pilgrims, it was also the resort of all the maddest fanatics and most

desperate adventurers in India. The hardy rabble of its streets, ready at a moment's notice to rush to arms, were very handy auxiliaries to any bold political conspirator—and there was never any lack of such refugees in the holy city.

Now, among all the turbulent spirits that kept Benares in a ferment during the year 1798, by far the most conspicuous and mischievous was Vizier Ali, the recently deposed sovereign of Oude. He was but nineteen years of age, and had only enjoyed the sovereignty for the brief period of two months, when he was summarily ejected. It is necessary, in order to understand the incidents of our story, to explain briefly who and what this Vizier Ali was. He was the putative son of Asaph ul Doulah, Nabob-vizier of Oude, a mere creature of the Company, who had died in 1797. On his death there were two claimants to the vacant throne: this putative or adopted son, whom the late Nabob-vizier had publicly recognised and acknowledged; and Saadut Ali, the eldest surviving brother of the deceased sovereign. Sir John Shore—afterwards Lord Teignmouth—the then Governor-general, at first rashly recognised the claim of Vizier Ali; but two months later had to revoke his recognition, and admit the superior validity of Saadut Ali's claim. The latter was accordingly brought from Benares to Lucknow, and proclaimed Nabob-vizier of Oude on the 21st January 1798; whilst Vizier Ali, to console him for his disappointment, was granted a pension of fifteen thousand a year and a palace at Benares. So leniently was the young prince treated, that no attempt was made to control or restrain his movements. He was permitted to keep regal state and surround himself with a large retinue of armed adherents—to maintain, in short, all the external appearance of an independent sovereign.

The folly and imprudence of allowing Vizier Ali to live in this style in such a city as Benares, within the confines of the very state of which he believed himself to be the rightful ruler, was presently to become fatally apparent. He was a bold, ambitious, unscrupulous young man, of fierce passions and headstrong will; and though vicious and debauched, was exceedingly popular among the rabble on account of his profuse liberality. Indeed, he was in the act of plotting the overthrow of British power in Oude, when one of his secret envoys, intrusted with treasonable despatches to Zemaun Shah, was seized by the Company's police. The detection of his intrigues was quickly followed by an order from the Governor-general for his removal to Calcutta. He was to be allowed to retain his income and his state; but it was felt that the only way to neutralise his mischievous propensities was to keep him under the strict surveillance of the British authorities and isolated from his fellow-conspirators. It remained now to announce to Vizier Ali this order, which must be a death-blow to all his ambition. And at this point it becomes necessary to introduce the two important characters who figure most prominently in the story of the spear.

At a short distance out of the city of Benares there is a pleasant suburb called Secrole, which the European residents—the majority of them English—had chosen as their quarters. Their houses, which stood usually in the centre of con-

siderable grounds, were built after the English style, with such modifications as the difference of climate necessitated. There was seldom more than one story above the ground-floor. The flat roof, however, afforded space for an extensive terrace, surrounded with a parapet, and approached by a single narrow winding staircase, from the top of which a trap-door gave access to the roof. It is requisite that these details of construction should be borne in mind in order to understand the main incident of the story. In this suburb, within a quarter of a mile of one another, lived at the time of this narrative the two chief civil authorities of the Company at Benares—Mr Cherry, the political agent of the Governor-general, and Mr Samuel Davis, judge and magistrate of the district and city court. Mr Cherry, from the nature of his duties, was necessarily brought sometimes into personal contact with Vizier Ali; but with this exception, the haughty young prince held no communication whatever with Europeans. Upon Mr Cherry devolved the necessity of announcing to Vizier Ali the order of the Governor-general directing his immediate removal from Benares to Calcutta. The political agent was unfortunately a good-tempered, easy-going man of a singularly unsuspicious nature. From the very first he had been completely hoodwinked by the wily young Vizier Ali, in whose honesty and good faith he implicitly believed. When, therefore, the first ebullition of rage at the announcement of the Governor-general's order was succeeded by humble submission and a declaration of the Vizier's readiness to leave Benares as soon as his travelling arrangements could be completed, poor unsuspecting Mr Cherry took it for granted that there would be no further trouble about carrying the order into execution.

Mr Davis, on the other hand, was a man of sagacity and penetration, who knew the treacherous nature of orientals too well to be duped by professions of friendship and loyalty, and who had besides, from information supplied through his police agents, the best possible reasons for distrusting Vizier Ali. It was he who discovered that there had been secret negotiations with Zemaun Shah, and it was owing to his emphatic representations that the Governor-general was induced to issue the peremptory order of removal. He had repeatedly warned Mr Cherry too; but that infatuated person would believe nothing to the discredit of Vizier Ali.

On the evening of the 13th of January 1799, Vizier Ali sent a messenger to Mr Cherry announcing his intention of visiting the political agent the next day 'at the hour of breakfast.' On the morning of the 14th of January, as Mr Davis was taking his customary ride on an elephant, he saw Vizier Ali, accompanied by a train of some three hundred horse and foot, pass on his way to the residence of Mr Cherry. As there was, however, nothing unusual in the sight, for Vizier Ali was always so attended, the judge thought nothing more of it at the time. But on his return home from his ride he found his *cutwal* or head of police awaiting him in a state of great perturbation with the news that he had just received sure information that Vizier Ali had despatched emissaries over the whole of Oude summoning armed men to his standard, and that he feared the Vizier's visit to Mr Cherry had some sinister

object. Mr Davis at once sent a hasty note to Mr Cherry, and waited in much anxiety and impatience for the reply. It was not long in coming; but in a very different form from what he anticipated. First there was a great cloud of dust, then a confused sound of shouts and cries, then the tramp of many feet, then a glimpse of men and horses and glittering steel. The solitary sentry at the gate, fifty yards from the house, challenged the advancing crowd; his challenge was answered by half-a-dozen musket-shots, and with a ferocious yell the mingled medley of horse and foot rushed over his corpse towards the house. There was murder in that yell, and the judge knew it; but his heart never quailed, nor did his presence of mind for a moment forsake him. He ran to his wife's apartments, bade her flee like lightning with her two children and her female servants up the winding staircase and through a trap-door to the roof; then dashed back for his firearms, but only to find the room in which they were, filled with the fierce followers of Vizier Ali. Remembering that there was a spear in one of the rooms above—think of the cool-headedness of the man, so unflustered by the danger that he could remember this!—he had just time to snatch the weapon from the wall and gain the trap-door when he heard the quick tramp of his pursuers close upon his heels. Turning to the terrified women and children, he bade them lie down flat in the centre of the roof, so that no stray bullets might reach them, told them to remember that General Erskine's camp was not ten miles away, and that without doubt help was even now on the way to them; then, spear in hand, and kneeling on one knee, he took up his post at the trap-door, resolved to hold that coign of vantage so long as life and strength were left him.

The staircase was a peculiar one, winding round a central stem, supported by four wooden posts, open at all sides, and so narrow as to allow only one person to ascend at a time. The trap-door which communicated with the roof was like a hatchway on board ship, and the judge kept it open, that he might have a fair view of his assailants as they came up to the assault.

He was not long kept in suspense. Rapidly the ascending footsteps approached, until the head and shoulders of a man appeared. It was Izzut Ali, one of the bosom friends of Vizier Ali, who sword in hand confronted the intrepid judge. For a moment Izzut stopped short, eyeing the figure above him, and then burst into a storm of abuse and execration. Having exhausted his stock of anathemas, he made a rush forward.

'Back, you scoundrel!' cried the judge; 'the troops are coming from the camp.'

Izzut Ali gave a derisive laugh, and struck fiercely with his sword; the blow was parried, and a thrust from the spear transfixed his arm. With a howl of rage and pain the first assailant fell back. Others pressed furiously forward from behind; but one after another they were sent back foiled and wounded, till no one cared to face that deadly spear-point and the strong arm that wielded it. Then they began to fire at the gallant defender of the stairs; but fortunately the peculiar construction of the staircase prevented them from taking good aim, and the balls went crashing harmlessly into the ceiling.

After a long fusillade it was resolved to make

one more effort to storm the trap-door; and this time the judge had a narrow escape. The first of the storming-party was a big powerful man, who dodged the thrust made at his head, and caught the spear-point in his strong grasp. It would have gone hard with Mr Davis had not the blade been triangular with sharp edges. But when, exerting all his force, he gave a desperate pull, the sharp edges cut through his antagonist's hands, inflicting severe wounds, and the spear was jerked out of his gripe. After that, no one ventured to come to close quarters with the judge, and his assailants contented themselves with keeping up for some time a desultory and harmless fire. Finally, they grew tired of this waste of ammunition, and proceeded to wreak their vengeance upon the judge's furniture, as they could not reach his body. After they had smashed up everything they could lay their hands upon, there was a mysterious and unaccountable silence. Not a sound of any kind was to be heard. Had the foiled assassins given up the attack in despair, and gone to seek other and less formidable victims? One of the female servants cautiously peered over the parapet. A shower of bullets rattled round her in an instant, and one of them pierced her arm. It was clear then that the house was surrounded and vigilantly watched. Again all was silent. The judge dared not leave his post of vantage to reconnoitre, though the silence was more trying than the noise. Could they be going to fire the house, and give the hapless inmates but the choice between massacre and burning?

Two hours had elapsed since the first assault upon the trap-door; surely the news of the rising must have reached Erskine's camp, and troops must be on the way to Benares. Suddenly the silence was again broken; there was the sound of footsteps, ascending the staircase. Once more the judge set his teeth, grasped his spear, and prepared to sell his life dearly. The steps came nearer, then a turbaned head appeared. In another instant the upraised spear would have been driven through the turban into the skull beneath it, when the intruder lifted his head and shewed the white beard and withered face of one of the judge's own body-servants. Fearing treachery, however, Mr Davis kept him at bay until he was assured that the party consisted of friends. He then descended, and found the new arrivals to be fifteen sepoy and a few of his own police. As the sepoys were armed with musket and bayonet, and had fifteen rounds apiece, the judge felt that he was now equal to standing a siege, and heard without dismay that Vizier Ali was preparing for another attack in greater force. Meanwhile he inquired if anything had been heard of Mr Cherry. He was told that to the best of his informant's belief Sahib Cherry and all the Englishmen with him had been killed. The judge was still musing over this melancholy news, when he was roused by another alarm, the rattle of sabres and the clatter of horses' hoofs. A hurried glance from the window, however, set all his fears at rest; for in the new-comers he recognised a troop of cavalry from Erskine's camp. The first hearty greeting over, the officer in command briefly explained that immediately on the receipt of the news of Vizier Ali's insurrection, he had been ordered to hasten forward with his

small force, and announce the approach of reinforcements. They had ridden first to Mr Cherry's; and there they found the house sacked, and the dead bodies of Mr Cherry and four other Englishmen lying mutilated in the grounds. Then they hurried to Judge Davis's, expecting to find a similar horrible spectacle awaiting them there; but were overjoyed to discover that here at least they were not too late. Little more remains to be told. All danger was now over. A strong force under General Erskine arrived shortly afterwards; and though there was some severe street-fighting, yet before nightfall, Vizier Ali's palace was stormed, his followers dispersed, and order restored in the city. The arch-conspirator himself, however, escaped, and at the head of a band of marauders made himself troublesome for a few months on the frontier; but was eventually betrayed to the English by the Rajah of Jeypore, with whom he had taken refuge, and kept in close confinement till his death.

By a curious coincidence, Vizier Ali was brought into Benares a prisoner on the anniversary of the memorable day which had witnessed the massacre of Mr Cherry and the heroic defence of Judge Davis.

As for the gallant Horatius of the staircase, he received the due meed of his valour. His grateful fellow-countrymen at Benares hailed him as their saviour from a cruel massacre. And the Governor-general, the Marquis of Wellesley, wrote expressing his high admiration of the splendid courage and coolness displayed by Mr Davis on that occasion; to which alone, he said, 'was to be attributed the safety of the English residents, and the salvation of the city from pillage.' For there could be no doubt that by holding the Vizier and his forces at bay for two hours, the judge enabled the other European residents to make their escape to General Erskine's camp, and kept the insurrection from spreading into a serious and formidable rebellion. Nor was there wanting more substantial recognition of the judge's gallantry and resolution. He was shortly afterwards removed to Calcutta, where he was promoted to a post of high honour and emolument. And at the time of his death he was one of the most respected and influential Directors of the great Company whose interests he had so faithfully and bravely served.

At the mansion of Hollywood, near Bristol, the seat of his son Sir John Francis Davis, who for his distinguished services in China received a baronetage in 1846, the spear which figures in this story is still preserved with the deepest veneration, and will doubtless be handed down as a cherished and precious heirloom from generation to generation of the descendants of Samuel Davis. Cheeks will glow and pulses quicken as the story of that memorable feat of arms is told. Nor is it only in the family of the hero that these feelings of sympathetic pride and enthusiasm will be stirred. In some degree at any rate, would we hope that they may be stirred in the heart of every reader of this narrative. And who can tell but that some stout-hearted Briton who shall hereafter find himself in forlorn straits, may take fresh courage from the recollection of the brave judge of Benares, who with his single spear held the staircase against three hundred foes! For never surely was there a story yet that more forcibly pointed the moral

that 'While there's life there's hope;' and that even the most desperate game may be pulled out of the fire by dauntless determination and patient courage.

COOLIE IMMIGRANTS IN BRITISH GUIANA.

IN a recent number of this *Journal* we laid before our readers a Glimpse of Overseering in Demerara; and we would now say something about the coolie labourers employed on the plantations in that colony.

Among a certain class there exists a prejudice against the introduction of East Indians, male or female, into Demerara and the other West Indian colonies. Obstacles of every conceivable kind have until quite recently been thrown in their way, and it has even been alleged that on the arrival of coolies in the colony they are not only overworked and underpaid, but that they are subjected to every hardship possible to imagine. These statements are really nothing else but calumnies, as the writer, who has had experience of a planter's life for some years, and been in daily personal intercourse with the coolies during that time, can testify.

The plantation-work of Demerara being well suited to the capacity of East Indian (Coolie) labourers, thousands of them seek their fortunes in the colony. On their arrival they are distributed among the planters by the Immigration Agent-general acting under the Governor; the number being regulated according to the application of each planter, his means of providing for them, and his willingness and ability to pay the cost of the immigration by periodical instalments. The coolies on being assigned to an estate are at once put under a contract or indenture to work there for five years. At the expiration of this period they are free, and can return to their native country if they like, being entitled to a gratuitous passage home. While subject to this contract they are bound by law to work, unless prevented through illness; and should any try to evade their contract, by desertion, shirking, or other means, they render themselves liable to be summoned before the district stipendiary magistrate, who may fine or imprison them. The time spent in jail as a punishment for idleness is registered against them in the estate books. At the expiration of the five years' term of service, any period a coolie has thus spent in jail has to be made good before he is entitled to receive a certificate of exemption from labour.

The manager of an estate is obliged to have work always ready for his labourers, and to pay them for it weekly at stipulated rates, which are nearly similar all over the colony. The men often earn two and three shillings a day; and when it is taken into consideration that the estate finds them a good lodging, and that a single man seldom spends more than four shillings on his sustenance during a week, the remuneration is usually considered ample. Moreover, the official returns issued by the Immigration Agents in

Georgetown and Calcutta shew that large sums of money are carried back to their country by returning immigrants, after their term of service has expired.

The coolies are able at any time to lay a complaint of bad treatment, insufficient wages, overwork, or any other grievance under which they may believe themselves to be suffering, before a local magistrate or Immigration Agent; and these complaints are always sifted to the bottom, and if found true, redress is immediate. In fact so warmly has the head of the Immigration Department been their defender and partisan, that he is nicknamed 'the coolies' papà.' In cases of alleged hardship, the coolies will carry their grievance to headquarters, and it is by no means an uncommon spectacle to the merchants and store-keepers of Georgetown to see fifty or sixty coolie labourers appear in Water Street on their way to the Immigration Office. They have come from some estate in the country, armed with their shovels and forks, just as they have struck work, to lay a general complaint against the manager, overseers, and foremen of the estate to which they belong. Usually, the sum and substance of their complaints is that they are not paid sufficiently for their labour, and that they would like some little addition to their wages.

The complaints, whatever they be, being carefully taken down in intelligible language, the men are told to return to their work, and that an investigation will take place on the morrow. The next day, the manager of the estate gets an official intimation that such a charge has been made, and that Mr T— will arrive at a stated time to investigate the case. The Agent arrives; the coolies renew their charge, but with less vehemence and more regard to truth, now that they are in the presence of their masters. The manager refuses to increase their pay, alleging that what has already been promised them is a fair equivalent for their work. A visit to the field where the work in question has been commenced takes place. It not infrequently happens that the Immigration Agent finds himself unable to come to a decision from his ignorance of planting details; and in such cases, four well-known planters are summoned—two chosen by the manager, and two by the coolies. Both parties then agree to decide by their judgment. With every wish to decide in the immigrants' favour, it is seldom that the Immigration Agent finds himself able to do so, for the simple reason, that as a rule the work is found to have been fairly valued, and at similar rates to those paid on neighbouring estates at the same time. The regular monthly visit of the Immigration Agent also affords the coolies opportunities of bringing complaints, thus saving them the time and trouble a walk to the town or magistrate's residence would entail.

The immigrants' time of work is limited by law to seven hours a day in the open air, and ten hours a day under cover in the manufactories; if, however, they like to work a longer time for extra pay, they are open to do so, and most of them gladly avail themselves of this right, by which they secure more wages at the end of the week. The children are free from birth, and when grown up usually develop into the most useful and skilful labourers. As a further inducement to the immigrants to work well, they are entitled to a

day's leave provided they labour with tolerable steadiness; and an industrious man or woman never asks in vain for two or three days or even a week's leave, supposing they wish to travel to a distant part of the country. Their children are formed into gangs, and employed at light easy work about the manufactory, or in the fields, being paid from sixpence to tenpence a day according to their age and ability.

The labourers on all estates are under the immediate supervision of several foremen, called 'drivers.' These men are coolies themselves, and are specially selected by the manager of an estate as men of superior intelligence and strength, and as having shewn themselves thoroughly acquainted with and able to perform the different descriptions of agricultural work they will have to superintend. These men are in receipt of fixed wages, and enjoy many agreeable privileges. It is their duty to stop all disputes, report everything wrong that may come under their notice, and be all day long with their fellow-immigrants in the fields, superintending their work, besides having to accomplish a host of minor duties. To rise to this position is the great ambition of most coolies, and the hope of one day becoming a driver acts as a very healthy stimulant to induce them to increase their industry.

There must be a hospital on each estate for the labourers, and a regular doctor; and when ill, and consequently inmates of this hospital, the coolies receive medical attendance, medicines, and food gratis. Properly qualified men called 'sick-nurses' have charge of these hospitals, and always live on the premises. The doctor visits three or four times a week, and in serious cases once or twice a day if need be.

The chief difficulty the coolies experience is in their acclimatisation and in recovering from the attacks of colony fever—not yellow fever—which is certain sooner or later to prostrate them, or anybody else, after their arrival in the colony.

Now we will suppose the first four months of a man's indenture passed; he has recovered from his worst attacks of fever; his hands have hardened, allowing him to grasp his *cultas*—a Demerara agricultural implement—without pain or blistering; he has learned tolerably well how to perform the different kinds of work, and has settled down to his new life just as a boy at school does after his first term. As for the first three or four months after their introduction the coolies are not sufficiently acquainted with their work, and might find it difficult on this account to earn a fair week's wages with which to support themselves, it is the custom for new coolies to be fed by the estate for the time being. They receive a good meal twice a day, and get biscuits and tea early in the morning. Were a man, therefore, at first only to earn as little as sixpence a week, he would not starve in consequence. The food is generally served out already cooked. Two and fourpence is deducted from each immigrant's weekly wages to pay for this food; but supposing that any man or woman has not earned so much, the estate is the loser, as the amount short is not carried on against them into the next week, but foregone at once.

Generally speaking, the coolies arrive from Calcutta almost destitute, and though perhaps they may experience rather a hard time of it for the

first four or five months after their introduction, so satisfied do they at length become with their lot, that as a rule they abandon all idea of returning to their native country, and ultimately settle down in the colony, as may be seen by the numerous coolie villages generally situated near large estates in the country. Even before their indentures have expired the men invest largely in cattle, and their wives invariably keep poultry or goats. A stranger landing in Georgetown cannot fail to be struck by the cheerful and happy aspect of the coolie men and women he meets as he walks along the streets. The Indian look of the place is heightened by the appearance of the population, the streets being filled with coolies in the picturesque garb of the East, with their wives in their bright dresses, their arms, ankles, and often ears and noses loaded with gold and silver jewellery, and their children in the garb of Eden.

Before concluding this paper, I must say a few words about the annual festival of the coolies, called the Taga, to celebrate which they are allowed from three to six days' leave. This festival usually takes place at the end of January or beginning of February, and preparations for it are commenced months before. The ceremony consists of the coolies carrying about the country structures made of bamboo covered with different kinds of coloured paper, which they call temples. The coolies of each estate attire themselves in bright apparel, and vie with one another in the size and gaudy magnificence of their temples. While these are being carried about by night at the head of long processions of coolies bearing torches, fencing, boxing, and other feats of strength are resorted to. The festival lasts two or three days, and is much looked forward to; as a rule, however, planters do not much encourage it, as after the third day a great deal of drinking goes on, and the immigrants do not recover from their exertions and excesses for weeks afterwards; moreover, its celebration has not unfrequently led to a free fight taking place between the coolies of two neighbouring estates, which has sometimes ended fatally for some of the rioters. However, it comes but once a year, and as it is the only real holiday these people enjoy, it seems hard to grudge it them. The most amusing part is that, on the last day of the festival, the temples and gorgeous structures upon which they have spent so much time and money are thrown into the river or into some old ditch, where they are left to rot and fall to pieces. In such places these remnants of departed grandeur may be seen for months afterwards.

In bringing this paper to a conclusion, the writer hopes that to any one who has had the patience to follow him so far, it will be tolerably clear that the coolies who leave Hindustan to try their fortunes in Demerara, are not subject to the persecutions and hardships supposed by many to be their lot. Looking at the subject from a thoroughly worldly point of view, it pays a planter much better to treat his coolies as human beings, susceptible of feelings like ourselves, than like wild beasts; and this the planters know perfectly well. So long as there is a constant and steady flow of immigration from India, Demerara is secured of prosperity; but once let this introduction of labour into Demerara cease, the wages which would be demanded for native labour would render it impossible for the planter to carry out

his operations with anything like success. Immigration, then, is as the lifeblood in her veins, endowed with which, Demerara is reserved for a great life in the future.

IRISH TRAITS.

MARY'S ABBEY, F—LANE, ETC.

A MODERN writer—A. M. Sullivan, author of *New Ireland*—has remarked upon 'the greater seriousness of character which the famine period has imprinted on the Irish people; and no one who knew them well, and was familiar with their manners and habits before the 'black forty-seven,' will fail to indorse the truth of this observation. The once reckless taking-no-thought-for-the-morrow, living-from-hand-to-mouth system, has in a great measure gone out with the exclusive potato diet; but notwithstanding the diminution of improvidence and increased 'seriousness,' much of the old characteristic remains. The light-hearted fun, the keen relish of a joke still so prevalent, strike one, especially after an absence from the Green Isle.

Very noticeable was this to a small party of travellers who a few weeks since landed in Dublin from one of the North Wall steamers, having been absentees from the Green Isle for some considerable time. The boat was very full, and the moment the gangway was let down, the majority of the passengers pressed eagerly towards it.

Why is it that travellers, who surely cannot *all* want to catch a train or secure the best rooms at a hotel, and to whom, therefore, a few minutes sooner or later cannot be a matter of vital importance, *will* crowd and push and squeeze, getting themselves elbowed and jostled as they are propelled forward by the throng, bumped up against knobby packages, hand-bags, umbrellas, sticks, dressing-cases, and all the various articles where-with passengers encumber themselves, and over which in the jam and crowd they have no control?

Our travellers elected to stay quietly behind until the rush had subsided, so that when they emerged from the *Shamrock*, the quay was comparatively deserted, and only a few cabs were left. Along the line of these, among the cabbies, some rare and wonderful joke was passing. Peal after peal of laughter followed each sally as it flashed from one driving-seat to another. A man whose cab was just before the brougham where our friends sat waiting for their luggage, actually wriggled with delight at some extra-pungent repartee, drumming his feet on the footboard in an ecstasy of appreciation, and causing his sleepy horse to rouse from his doze and prick up his ears. The joke, whatever it was, had not died out when the cabbies, despairing of more fares—their spirits in nowise damped thereby—drove away, firing off parting shots of mirth-provoking fun with many a backward flourish of the whip at those left behind. The party, fresh from the sedate Jehus

of Euston and Paddington, were fain to confess that Paddy could still be sometimes 'himself again.'

But it is in the fairs and markets, the back-slums of towns, and wherever the lower orders congregate to buy and sell, that national characteristics most abound; and very droll they sometimes are.

Mary's Abbey in Dublin, frequented by customers of this class, affords many examples. Goods of various descriptions are ranged along the edge of the road-way in baskets, barrows, trays, and stands of temporary construction. Here a table of old clothes, brushed and furbished up to the best advantage; next crockery-ware; then a tray of gaudy artificial flowers, round whose splendid attractions, with longing eyes the young girls cluster, like bees about a lavender-bush; some of the damsels exceeding comely and good to look at. Cheap fish, not always the freshest; fruit at times ditto ditto; strings of onions, old nails, penny toys; smart muslin caps, knitted stockings, and bright-coloured woollen mufflers dazzling to behold; clay-pipes, sacks of potatoes, rows of second-hand boots and shoes, wooden ware.

Here is a man shouting out at the top of his voice: 'Three silver spoons for a halfpenny! Come and buy, ladies. Who'd keep on stirring their tay wid the bone of a herring, when they could buy three splendid silver spoons for wan halfpenny? Stand back there, gentlemen'—to the crew of ragged young street arabs pressing round—'stand back, if ye please, and don't crowd the ladies. Don't ye see they want to examine the plate?'

Farther on—in P—— Lane, an unsavoury region chiefly devoted to fish—a group of women are squatted round one presiding over a basket of herrings, listening eagerly while she narrates how Big Moll was 'run in by the póliss—she having a dhrup in her the same time.'

'And sarve her right,' adds the speaker viciously. 'There isn't one in all Ireland handier with her fists and her tongue nor herself. Last Christmas, she and I had an argyment in Moore Street, and I guv her the lie before the whole market. With that, my dear, she ups with a big pot-stick was in her hand, and without another word she downs me. I thought I was kill't. Biddy O'Shea run up. "Vo, vo! Mrs Brien ma'am," she calls out, "are you dead?" "No jewel," sez I; "not dead; only spachless." For I couldn't spake, with the stun I was after gettin' when I was stretched. At last I come to, and struggled up be degrees; and away with me to Jervis Street Hospital wid my head in my hand to the doctor. He done the best he could, and plaistered it up. But ever since, and more especial when there's a change in the weather and rain coming on, there does be a humming and a bizzing and a buzzing in it, as if a whole swarm of honey-bees was working away in th' inside. Never fear but what I made the lady sup sorrow for what she done; summonsed her before the magistrate, and got her two months—I did!'

Beyond these sits a wizened, meek-faced little woman keeping guard over a tray of doughy cakes.

She wears a shabby brown shawl; and stuck on the top of her grizzled head is a morsel of a bonnet, all lace and feather and gossamer, that evidently has surmounted, at fête or garden-party, the dainty *chevelure* of youth and beauty, before—in the vicissitudes clothes are heir to—it came down, dragged and defiled, to P—— Lane. The effect in its present position is grotesque in the extreme.

'Lovely cakes!' cries the wearer of the faded finery; 'beautiful and fresh, baked this morning. The smell of 'em coming out o' the oven would rise your heart. I just laid the dish on the kitchen floor for one minute; and the black beetles, when they got the lovely whiff of it—'tis they're the lads that knows what's good, and small blame to 'em—come swarming round in hundreds an' hundreds; you'd think 'twas a funeral was there. Just see the flies now, settling down and spotted all over the top, as if they was currants. Take one, acushla; this to a starved-looking little girl with a puny child in her arms, who is eying wistfully the tempting delicacies, and about to cower shyly away as she catches the eye of their owner.—'Ye haven't got the coppers; is that it? What matter! I'll be paid in heaven. And give a mouthful to the babby; he looks hungry enough, God help him!'

'Potaties! Arrah wisha now, d'ye tell me ye have the face to call them potatoes? Marbles is what I'd call them. Why, woman alive! they're that small, a goose would be ashamed of itself that couldn't swallow them whole!'

'Look at mine, will you!' shouts a neighbour, opening wider the mouth of a sack; 'beauties! Them's what you may call praties, and no mistake. Top of the market—thumpers! Sure they're finer this saison—glory be to God!—nor we've had them since the year of the great rot. So big that they were scrooging one another out of the ground; the little ones crying out to the big fellows to lie over and lave them room to grow.'

The right of husbands to inflict personal discipline on their weaker halves seems to inspire the latter with extra respect for their lords and masters. One who does not assert it when there is due cause, is apt to be looked down upon by the ladies of P—— Lane.

'That's a fine black-eye you've got, missis,' says a man to a gaunt beldam who comes striding along, a fish-basket at her back. 'Fightin' again, I suppose, eh?'

'No; I wasn't fightin'. Himself it was gave me that.—And I'd like to know,' facing fiercely round on the questioner—'I'd like to know who had a better right?'

'A pretty sort o' man *you*, to spake in that way!—Look neighbours, he tould the wife—threatening-like—that he'd bate her as black as a mourning-coach if she'd attempt to go again his orders. *Him?* He dar'n't. He hasn't the sperrit of a field-mouse. If she got the stick, as she ought, 'twould do her good; a born divvle, as she always was. Didn't I see her with my own eyes break two eggs upon his face one time they had a differ about something? He bate her, indeed!'

A gentleman appears, threading his way through the lounging chaffing idlers, and groups of eager busy buyers and sellers. He is bound for the Four Courts, and making through P—— Lane a

short-cut. General attention is fixed on 'the Counsellor.'

'Faix, if you had all the larning that that one has under his hair, you might considher yerself a wise man.'

'I'd sooner have the money he has in his purse.'

'More fool you then! Sure 'tis with their brains the likes o' them fills their pockets.'

A beggar-woman has espied the pedestrian, and straightway fastens on her prey. Shuffling along to keep up with his hurried footsteps, she follows him pertinaciously the whole length of the street, whining forth complaints and supplications in the face of repeated refusals. At last his patience is exhausted. He turns angrily on his tormentor: 'You have already got your answer. I never give to beggars in the street!'

'You don't sir, don't ye? give in the street? Och thin'—changing her tone to one of ironical politeness—'sure if I knew where yer honour lives, and if you'll just tell me your address and the number of your house, I'll call upon you an' welcome. Faix, I will, with all the pleasure in life, call any day you appoint for whatsoever 'twill be plazing to yer worship's honour to give me.'

The cool humour of her speech, ignoring the gentleman's angry irritation, and affecting to misunderstand his meaning, elicits transports of delight from the grinning audience.

There are some persons to whom queer things are often happening. Or is it that having a turn for humour, they see it, where others fail to perceive the ridiculous? G—— was one of these. Arriving in Dublin rather suddenly on one occasion, he found there was to be a Drawing-room at the Castle that night; and meaning to go, he directed his servant to put out his court-dress in readiness. Up to the throne-room he was making his way through the usual crowded throng and the usual baking heat, from numberless lamps and numbers of warm fellow-creatures, when he was taken with a violent fit of sneezing. Among the slowly moving multitude, acquaintances and greetings cropped up.

'G——, my dear fellow, I'm so glad to— Tsha! When did— Tsha! tsha!'

'I only arrived— Tsha! tsha! Confound it! Caught cold, I suppose, and'—

'And have given it to me!'—with another sneeze.

A lady close by now began sneezing; and soon the infection spread, and there was tsha-tshaing all round. Such struggles to get at pockets and extract handkerchiefs among the closely packed company, ladies encumbered with their trains and fans and bouquets, not a hand available; and men handicapped with cocked-hats and swords, the latter giving civilian wearers, unaccustomed to their management, quite enough to do to prevent their tripping themselves up, sticking into their neighbours' legs, or getting foul of ladies' trains. It was the drollest scene imaginable, this sneezing chorus, and quite unaccountable; until G——, on his return home, discovered that his housekeeper—who like John Gilpin's wife was a 'careful soul'—had, when laying aside his court-suit, plentifully besprinkled it with pepper, to keep off moths. A good deal of this had remained in the cloth and about the creases and pockets even after brushing, and the heat of the crowded vice-regal rooms had

brought out its pungency, and set every one within reach of it sneezing.

G—— belonged to a family whose thoroughly Hibernian love of a joke was irrepressible. One of them meeting an old acquaintance he had not seen for many years, found the latter full of inquiries.

'And how are all your children?' he said. 'Tell me about them.'

'Children! I have none.'

'Oh, beg pardon, my poor fellow! I'm so sorry! I ought not to have asked. You had such a fine flock!'

'And they're that still, folks say. Fine young men and women, every one. They grew up well.'

'And your brother?'

'My brother? He's long since gone the way of all flesh.'

'Ah, poor H——! the merriest, jolliest, best fellow in the world! Dear, dear, what a pity!'

'So his bachelor friends all say; but really I don't think he's worse off than any other man who's gone and been and committed matrimony. You'll find him much the same as ever.'

'And you too, old fellow, I find much the same as of old,' rejoined the amused friend—'always fond of your joke!'

A QUESTION.

My home is in the North; piercing and bitter

The winds that sweep o'er the cold Northern sky.

From morn till eve I hear no song-birds' twitter,

Only the sea-gull's harsh discordant cry.

To the black rocks pale sea-weed tufts are clinging—

The only flowers that here can find a root—

And foaming waves, their white spray wildly flinging,

Warn travellers here they may not stay their foot.

But in a Southern home my Love is dwelling;

Rich Southern blossoms spring beneath her feet;

Bright birds with radiant wings, her praises telling,

Circle and hover round her presence sweet.

Before her lies the sunlit summer ocean,

Whose blue waves scarcely seem to ebb or flow

The livelong summer day—while without motion

The bluer sky above; and soft winds blow.

Which would be truest love? Shall I, who love her

As mine own soul, invade her calm retreat,

And cry to her by the blue heaven above her:

'Be mine, or I must die! Come with me, Sweet;

The winds blow bitter, but they will not harm thee,

Clasped in my arms, and to my warm heart pressed;

The waves rise fiercely, yet they will but charm thee,

For thou wilt view them sheltered on my breast.'

Or shall I leave her in her Southern dwelling

Unknown or unwitting of my love,

And master my wild heart and curb its swelling,

Whilst she walks sheltered in her orange grove?

Would it be love to bear her from its cover,

Upon my barren rocks to fade and pine?

Yes, if she loved me!—half but as I love her!

Aid me, kind Heaven! Say which course shall be mine!

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